

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for determining a period of time to complete a payment to a payee,  
2 comprising:  
3       storing information identifying a payment issue time of each of one or  
4 more payments to a payee issued on behalf of one or more payees;  
5       receiving post-issue event information associated with each of the one or  
6 more payments; and  
7       determining a period of time, based upon the stored information and the  
8 received post-issue event information, to complete a future payment to the payee  
9 issued on behalf of a payor
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the received post-issue event information  
2 includes a plurality of types of post-issue event information and each of the  
3 plurality of types of post-issue event information is associated with a priority level,  
4 and further comprising:  
5       identifying the received post-issue event information of the type having the  
6 highest priority level;  
7       wherein the period of time is determined based upon the stored  
8 information and the identified post-issue event information having the highest  
9 priority level.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein:

2 the received post-issue event information includes a plurality of types of  
3 post-issue event information and each of the plurality of types of post-issue event  
4 information is associated with a priority level and a threshold number; and  
5 the period of time is determined based upon the stored information and the one  
6 of the plurality of types of post-event information having a highest priority level for  
7 which a number of instances of receipt is greater than an associated threshold  
8 number.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the received post-issue event information, for  
2 each of the one or more payments, includes at least one of i) information  
3 identifying a time that the payee posts the payment, ii) information identifying a  
4 time that the payee deposits a payment instrument associated with the payment  
5 at a financial institution, and iii) information identifying a time that a financial  
6 institution that maintains a deposit account upon which a debit associated with  
7 the payment is drawn settles the debit.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein:

2 if the received post-issue event information is posting information, the  
3 posting information is received from the payee;

4 if the received post-issue event information is deposit information, the  
5 deposit information is received from at least one of the payee, a payor on whose  
6 behalf the payment to the payee is issued, and a financial institution; and

7 if the received post-issue event information is settlement information, the  
8 settlement information is received from one of the payor and a financial  
9 institution.

1 6. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

2 determining if the received post-issue event information includes posting  
3 information;

4 if the received post-issue event information does not include posting  
5 information, determining if the received post-issue event information includes  
6 deposit information; and

7 if the received post-issue event information does not include deposit  
8 information, determining if the received information includes settlement  
9 information;

10 wherein the period of time to complete a future payment to the payee is  
11 determined based upon the stored information and determined included  
12 information.

1 7. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

2 determining if a number of payments to the payee for which received post-  
3 issue event information includes posting information is greater than a first  
4 predetermined number of payments;

5 if the determined number of payments to the payee for which received  
6 post-issue event information includes posting information is not greater than the

7 first predetermined number of payments, determining if a number of payments to  
8 the payee for which received post-issue event information includes deposit  
9 information is greater than a second predetermined number of payments; and

10 if the determined number of payments to the payee for which received  
11 post-issue event information includes deposit information is not greater than the  
12 second predetermined number of payments, determining if a number of  
13 payments to the payee for which received post-issue event information includes  
14 settlement information is greater than a third predetermined number of payments;

15 wherein, if the determined number of payments to the payee for which  
16 received post-issue event information includes posting information is greater than  
17 the first predetermined number of payments, the period of time to complete a  
18 future payment to the payee is determined based upon the stored information  
19 and the received posting information;

20 wherein, if the determined number of payments to the payee for which  
21 received post-issue event information includes deposit information is greater than  
22 the second predetermined number of payments, the period of time to complete a  
23 future payment to the payee is determined based upon the stored information  
24 and the received deposit information; and

25 wherein, if the determined number of payments to the payee for which  
26 received post-issue event information includes settlement information is greater  
27 than the third predetermined number of payments, the period of time to complete  
28 a future payment to the payee is determined based upon the stored information  
29 and the received settlement information.

1 8. The method of claim 4, wherein, if a number of payments to the payee made  
2 for which received post-issue event information includes posting information is  
3 less than a predetermined number of payments, the period of time to complete a  
4 future payment to the payee is determined based upon the stored information,  
5 received posting information, and at least one of received deposit information  
6 and received settlement information.

1 9. The method of claim 4, wherein the one or more payments is a plurality of  
2 payments, and further comprising:

3 if the received post-issue event information is posting information,  
4 determining an average period from time of payment issuance to time of payment  
5 posting for the plurality of payments;

6 if the received post-issue event information is deposit information,  
7 determining an average period from time of payment issuance to time of  
8 depositing for the plurality of payments; and

9 if the received post-issue event information is settlement information,  
10 determining an average period from time of payment issuance to time of  
11 settlement for the plurality of payments;

12 wherein the period of time to complete a future payment to the payee is  
13 based upon the determined average period.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

2 if the received post-issue event information is deposit information,  
3 determining an adjusted average period by combining the determined average  
4 period with a predetermined depositing adjustment period; and

5 if the received post-issue event information is settlement information,  
6 determining an adjusted average period by combining the determined average  
7 period with a predetermined settlement adjustment period;

8 wherein the determined adjusted average period is the period of time to  
9 complete a future payment to the payee.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 determining a form of payment; and

3 identifying those of the one or more payments having the determined  
4 form;

5 wherein the period of time to complete a future payment to the payee is  
6 determined based upon stored information associated with the identified  
7 payments and received post-issue event information associated with the  
8 identified payments.

1 12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

2 receiving a payment request to pay the payee on behalf of a payor;

3 transmitting information to the payor identifying the determined period of  
4 time to complete a future payment to the payee;

5 receiving, from the payor and responsive to the transmitted information  
6 identifying the determined period of time to complete a future payment to the  
7 payee, a date to issue payment to the payor; and  
8 initiating payment processing on the date;  
9 wherein the form of payment is determined at one of a time prior to receipt  
10 of the payment request, and a time subsequent to receipt of the payment  
11 request.

1 13. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 receiving a payment request to pay the payee on behalf of the payor, the  
3 payment request including information identifying a payment due date;  
4 determining a time to issue a payment to the payee to fulfill the payment  
5 request by the due date based upon the determined period of time to complete a  
6 future payment to the payee; and  
7 issuing a payment to the payee at the determined time.

1 14. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 determining a period of time to complete a future payment to the payee for  
3 each of a plurality of forms of payment based upon the stored information and  
4 the received post-issue event information;  
5 receiving a payment request to pay the payee on behalf of a payor;

6 transmitting information to the payor identifying at least two different  
7 payment options of a group of payment options consisting of a first payment  
8 option, a second payment option, and a third payment option;

9 receiving, from the payor and responsive to the transmitted option  
10 information, a selection of one of the options; and

11 issuing a payment to the payee in accordance with the one selected  
12 option, not a non-selected option;

13 wherein in the first option pre-posting information including information at  
14 least one of identifying the payor, identifying a payment amount, and identifying a  
15 bill is transmitted to the payee prior to a payment to fulfill the received payment  
16 request being directed to the payee;

17 wherein in the second option a payment to fulfill the received payment  
18 request is completed in accordance with a first one of the plurality of forms of  
19 payment having a shorter determined period of time than a second one of the  
20 plurality of forms of payment; and

21 wherein in the third option the payor determines a time for a payment to  
22 fulfill the received payment request to be issued to the payee, the payor-  
23 determined time not dependent upon a shortest determined period of time.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein transmitted option information associated  
2 with at least one of the first option and the second option identifies a cost to the  
3 payor associated with issuing payment in accordance with the option.



1 16. A system for determining a period of time to complete a payment to a payee,  
2 comprising:

3 a memory configured to store information identifying a payment issue time  
4 of each of one or more payments to a payee issued on behalf of one or more  
5 payees;

6 a communications interface configured to receive post-issue event  
7 information associated with each of the one or more payments; and

8 a processor configured to determine a period of time, based upon the  
9 stored information and the received post-issue event information, to complete a  
10 future payment to the payee issued on behalf of a payor.

1 17. The system of claim 16, wherein:

2 the received post-issue event information includes a plurality of types of  
3 post-issue event information and each of the plurality of types of post-issue event  
4 information is associated with a priority level; and

5 the processor is further configured to identify the received post-issue  
6 event information of the type having the highest priority level, and to determine  
7 the period of time based upon the stored information and the identified post-issue  
8 event information having the highest priority level.

1 18. The system of claim 16, wherein:

2 the received post-issue event information includes a plurality of types of post-  
3 issue event information and each of the plurality of types of post-issue event  
4 information is associated with a priority level and a threshold number; and

5 the processor is further configured to determine the period of time based upon  
6 the stored information and the one of the plurality of types of post-event information  
7 having a highest priority level for which a number of instances of receipt is greater  
8 than an associated threshold number.

1 19. The system of claim 16, wherein the received post-issue event information, for  
2 each of the one or more payments, includes at least one of i) information identifying  
3 a time that the payee posts the payment, ii) information identifying a time that the  
4 payee deposits a payment instrument associated with the payment at a financial  
5 institution, and iii) information identifying a time that a financial institution that  
6 maintains a deposit account upon which a debit associated with the payment is  
7 drawn settles the debit.

1 20. The system of claim 19, wherein:

2 if the received post-issue event information is posting information, the posting  
3 information is received from the payee;

4 if the received post-issue event information is deposit information, the deposit  
5 information is received from at least one of the payee, a payor on whose behalf the  
6 payment to the payee is issued, and a financial institution; and

7 if the received post-issue event information is settlement information, the  
8 settlement information is received from one of the payor and a financial institution.

1 21. The system of claim 19, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to i) determine if the received post-issue  
3 event information includes posting information, ii) if the received post-issue event  
4 information does not include posting information, determine if the received post-issue  
5 event information includes deposit information, iii) if the received post-issue event  
6 information does not include deposit information, determine if the received  
7 information includes settlement information, and iv) determine the period of time to  
8 complete a future payment to the payee based upon the stored information and the  
9 determined included information.

1 22. The system of claim 19, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to i) determine if a number of payments to  
3 the payee for which received post-issue event information includes posting  
4 information is greater than a first predetermined number of payments, ii) if the  
5 determined number of payments to the payee for which received post-issue event  
6 information includes posting information is not greater than the first predetermined  
7 number of payments, determine if a number of payments to the payee for which  
8 received post-issue event information includes deposit information is greater than a  
9 second predetermined number of payments, and iii) if the determined number of  
10 payments to the payee for which received post-issue event information includes  
11 deposit information is not greater than the second predetermined number of

12 payments, determine if a number of payments to the payee for which received post-  
13 issue event information includes settlement information is greater than a third  
14 predetermined number of payments;

15 if the determined number of payments to the payee for which received post-  
16 issue event information includes posting information is greater than the first  
17 predetermined number of payments, the period of time to complete a future payment  
18 to the payee is determined based upon the stored information and the received  
19 posting information;

20 if the determined number of payments to the payee for which received post-  
21 issue event information includes deposit information is greater than the second  
22 predetermined number of payments, the period of time to complete a future payment  
23 to the payee is determined based upon the stored information and the received  
24 deposit information; and

25 if the determined number of payments to the payee for which received post-  
26 issue event information includes settlement information is greater than the third  
27 predetermined number of payments, the period of time to complete a future payment  
28 to the payee is determined based upon the stored information and the received  
29 settlement information.

1 23. The system of claim 19, wherein, if a number of payments to the payee  
2 for which received post-issue event information includes posting information is less  
3 than a predetermined number of payments, the period of time to complete a future  
4 payment to the payee is determined based upon the stored information, received

5 posting information, and at least one of received deposit information and received  
6 settlement information.

1 24. The system of claim 19, wherein:

2 the one or more payments is a plurality of payments;

3 the processor is further configured to i) if the received post-issue event  
4 information is posting information, determine an average period from time of  
5 payment issuance to time of payment posting for the plurality of payments, ii) if the  
6 received post-issue event information is deposit information, determine an average  
7 period from time of payment issuance to time of depositing for the plurality of  
8 payments, iii) if the received post-issue event information is settlement information,  
9 determine an average period from time of payment issuance to time of settlement for  
10 the plurality of payments, and iv) determine the period of time to complete a future  
11 payment to the payee based upon the determined average period.

1 25. The system of claim 24, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to i) if the received post-issue event  
3 information is deposit information, determine an adjusted average period by  
4 combining the determined average period with a predetermined depositing  
5 adjustment period, and ii) if the received post-issue event information is settlement  
6 information, determine an adjusted average period by combining the determined  
7 average period with a predetermined settlement adjustment period; and

8 the determined adjusted average period is the period of time to complete a  
9 future payment to the payee.

1 26. The system of claim 16, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to i) determine a form of payment, ii)  
3 identify those of the one or more payments having the determined form, and iii)  
4 determine the period of time to complete a future payment to the payee based upon  
5 stored information associated with the identified payments and received post-issue  
6 event information associated with the identified payments.

1 27. The system of claim 26, wherein:

2 the communications interface is further configured to i) receive a payment  
3 request to pay the payee on behalf of a payor, ii) transmit information identifying the  
4 determined period of time to complete a future payment to the payee, and iii)  
5 receive, from the payor and responsive to the transmitted information identifying the  
6 determined period of time to complete a future payment to the payee, information  
7 identifying a date to issue payment to the payor;

8 the processor is further configured to i) cause the communications interface to  
9 transmit the information identifying the determined period of time, and ii) to initiate  
10 payment processing on the date responsive to the received date information; and

11 the processor determines the form of payment at one of a time prior to receipt  
12 of the payment request, and a time subsequent to receipt of the payment request.

1 28. The system of claim 16, wherein:

2 the communications interface is further configured to receive a payment  
3 request to pay the payee on behalf of the payor, the payment request including  
4 information identifying a payment due date; and

5 the processor is further configured to i) determine a time to issue a payment  
6 to the payee to fulfill the payment request by the due date based upon the  
7 determined period of time to complete a future payment to the payee, and ii) cause a  
8 payment to be issued to the payee at the determined time.

1 29. The system of claim 16, wherein:

2 the communication interface is further configured to i) receive a payment  
3 request to pay the payee on behalf of a payor, ii) transmit information to the payor  
4 identifying at least two different payment options of a group of payment options  
5 consisting of a first payment option, a second payment option, and a third payment  
6 option, and iii) receive, from the payor and responsive to the transmitted option  
7 information, a selection of one of the options;

8 the processor is further configured to i) cause the communications interface to  
9 transmit the option information responsive to the receipt of the payment request, and  
10 ii) cause a payment to be issued to the payee in accordance with the one selected  
11 option, not a non-selected option;

12 in the first option pre-posting information including information identifying at  
13 least one of the payor, a payment amount, and a bill is transmitted to the payee prior  
14 to a payment being issued to the payee on behalf of the payor;

15 in the second option a payment to fulfill the received payment request is  
16 completed in accordance with a first one of the plurality of forms of payment having a  
17 shorter determined period of time than a second one of the plurality of forms of  
18 payment;

19 in the third option the payor determines a time for a payment to fulfill the  
20 received payment request to be issued to the payee, the time being other than the  
21 earliest possible time; and  
22 transmitted option information associated with at least one of the first option  
23 and the second option identifies a cost to the payor associated with issuing payment  
24 in accordance with the option.